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#### Remarks:

The applicant has subsequently filed a sequence listing and declared, that it includes no new matter.

### (54) Overproduction of riboflavin in yeast

(57) The present invention is directed to a yeast strain which has been transformed by a recombinant DNA sequence comprising a DNA sequence which upon expression in a suitable host cell encodes at least one polypeptide with riboflavin biosynthetic activity and which DNA sequence is transcriptionally linked to a promotor functional in such yeast strain, a process for the production of riboflavin characterized therein that such a yeast strain is cultured under suitable culture conditions and process for the production of a food or feed composition

### Description

[0001] Derivatives of riboflavin (the flavocoenzymes FMN and FAD) are universally required for redox reactions in all cellular organisms. Riboflavin (vitamin B<sub>2</sub>) is produced by all plants and by many microorganisms [Demain A.L. Riboflavin oversynthesis. Ann. Rev. Microbiol. 1972, 26, 369]. The compound is not produced in vertebrates. Riboflavin is therefore an essential nutrient for man and animals.

[0002] Riboflavin can be produced by chemical synthesis and by various fermentation procedures using strains of *Bacillus* (e.g. *Bacillus subtilis*), the ascomycetes *Ashbya gossypii* and *Eremothecium ashbyi* [Demain A.L. Riboflavin oversynthesis. Ann. Rev. Microbiol. 1972, 26, 369 and Mitsuda H, Nakajima K., Effects of 8-azaguanine on riboflavin production and on the nucleotide pools in non-growing cells of Eremothecium ashbyii. J. Nutr Sci Vitaminol (Tokyo) 1973; 19(3):215-227], various yeast strains such as *Candida guilliermondii*, *Candida famata* [F.W. Tanner, Jr.C. Vojnovich, J.M. Van Lanen. Riboflavin production by Candida species. Nature, 1945, 101 (2616):180-181]and related strains, as well as other microorganisms.

[0003] The pathway of riboflavin biosynthesis in yeast is shown in Fig. 1. The precursors for the biosynthesis of the vitamin are guanosine triphosphate (GTP) and ribulose 5-phosphate. One mol of GTP and two mol of ribulose 5-phosphate are required to biosynthetically generate one mol of riboflavin.

[0004] In the yeast, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, the biosynthesis of the vitamin requires at least six genes, specifically the genes *RIB1*, *RIB2*, *RIB3*, *RIB4*, *RIB5* and *RIB7* [Oltmanns O., Bacher A., Lingens F. and Zimmermann F.K. Biochemical and genetic classification of riboflavine deficient mutants of Saccharomyces cerevisiae. Mol. Gen. Genet. 1969, 105, 3061. In *C. guilliermondii*, the biosynthesis of riboflavin has also been shown to require the products of at least six genes, specifically the genes *RIB1*, *RIB2*, *RIB3*, *RIB4*, *RIB5* and *RIB6* (2). The enzymes specified by these *C. guilliermondii* genes and their roles in the biosynthetic pathway are summarized in Fig. 1. In contrast to the situation in *B. subtilis*, the riboflavin biosynthetic genes are not clustered in the eukaryots *S. cerevisiae* and *C. guilliermondii*.

[0005] The initial step in the biosynthetic pathway is the opening of the imidazole ring of GTP catalyzed by the enzyme, GTP cyclohydrolase II. The product of this enzyme has been reported to be 2,5-diamino-6-ribosylamino-4(3H)-pyrimidinone 5'-phosphate. This intermediate is converted to 5-amino-6-ribitylamino-2,4(1H,3H)-pyrimidinedione by a sequence of side chain reduction, ring deamination, and dephosphorylation. The hypothetical enzyme involved in the dephosphorylation of 5-amino-6-ribitylamino 5'-phosphate is still unknown. The conversion of 5-amino-6-ribitylamino-2,4(1H,3H)-pyrimidinedione to 6,7-dimethyl-8-ribityllumazine by the enzyme, 6,7-dimethyl-8-ribityllumazine synthase, requires a second substrate, 3,4-dihydroxy-2-butanone 4-phosphate, which is obtained from ribulose 5-phosphate by the catalytic action of 3,4-dihydroxy-2-butanone-4-phosphate synthase. Finally, 6,7-dimethyl-8-ribityllumazine is converted to riboflavin by a dismutation reaction catalyzed by riboflavin synthase. The sequence of the *RIB1* gene directing the synthesis of GTP cyclohydrolase II, the initial enzyme of the riboflavin pathway, has been established in the yeast, *C. guilliermondii* (4).

[0006] Recombinant strains of *Bacillus subtilis* for the production of riboflavin by fermentation have been described, e.g. in EP 405 370. These strains carry the riboflavin operon under the control of a strong promoter directing the production of the cognate enzymes in large amount. The gene constructs of the riboflavin operon under the control of a strong promoter can be present at one or several different locations on the *B. subtilis* chromosome. The incorporation of an additional gene of the riboflavin pathway under the control of a strong promoter at a separate locus on the *B. subtilis* chromosome has also been shown to increase the yield of riboflavin obtained by fermentation, see EP 821 063. [0007] Whereas the production of riboflavin by strains of yeasts such as *C. guilliermondii* has been reported, recombinant DNA technology has not been applied for the overexpression of riboflavin biosynthetic genes in *C. guilliermondii* or in related flavinogenic yeasts so far.

[0008] It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide recombinant means which should allow the production of yeast strains which overproduce riboflavin. More specifically it is an object of the present invention to provide a yeast strain which has been transformed by a recombinant DNA sequence comprising a DNA sequence which upon expression in a suitable host cell encodes at least one polypeptide with riboflavin biosynthetic activity and which DNA sequence is transcriptionally linked to a promotor functional in such yeast strain and even more specifically such a yeast strain which belongs to the groups of flavinogenic yeasts which overproduce riboflavin under conditions of iron starvation like a yeast strain which is selected from the following group: Schwanniomyces, preferably Schwanniomyces occidentalis, Debaryomyces, preferably Debaryomyces kloeckeri, Torulopsis, preferably Torulopsis candida, or, especially Candida, preferably Candida guilliermondii or Candida famata (Logvinenko et al., Ukrainskii Biokhimicheskii Zhurnal 61(1), 28-32, 1989; Logvinenko et al., Mikrobiologiya 57(2), 181-186, 1988 and Nakase and Suzuki, Journal of General and Appl.Mikrobiology 31(1), 49-70 (1985). It is furthermore an object of the present invention into provide such yeast strains wherein the polypeptide encoding DNA sequence is from yeast, preferably flavinogenic yeasts which overproduce riboflavin under conditions of iron starvation, more preferably Candida, e.g. Candida guilliermondii or Candida famata.

[0009] It is also an object of the present invention to provide such yeast strains wherein the polypeptide encoding DNA

sequence encodes a protein with GTP cyclohydrolase II activity and is selected from the following DNA sequences:

a) the DNA sequence as shown in Fig. 5 or its complementary strand;

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- b) DNA sequences which hybridize under standard conditions to the protein coding regions of the DNA sequences defined in (a) or fragments thereof; and
  - c) DNA sequences which, but for the degeneracy of the genetic code, would hybridize to the DNA sequences defined in (a) and (b).
  - [0010] It is furthermore an object of the present invention to provide such yeast strains wherein the promotor is the TEF S. cerevisiae promotor.
  - [0011] It is also an object of the present invention to provide a process for the production of riboflavin characterized therein that a yeast strain as described above is cultured under suitable culture conditions and the riboflavin produced is isolated from the medium or the yeast strain by methods known to the man skilled in the art, and a process for the production of a food or feed composition characterized therein that riboflavin as obtained by such process is mixed with one or more suitable food or feed ingredients by a process known to the man skilled in the art.
- [0012] All *C. guilliermondii* strains used in the practice of the present invention are derivatives of the *C. guilliermondii* strain obtained from the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) under accession No. ATCC 9058 (1). Candida guilliermondii (ATCC 9058) has been redeposited as a Budapest Treaty deposit on April 1, 1998 and has been assigned accession No. ATCC 74437 *Candida guilliermondii* is a representative of yeast species which overproduce riboflavin (vitamin B2) under conditions of iron starvation. The group includes also *Schwanniomyces occidentalis*, (or called Debaryomyces occidentalis) *Debaryomyces cloeckeri*, *Torulopsis candida* and *Candida famata*. The latter species is used for industrial production of riboflavin. Regarding the taxomonic assignments of yeast species a man skilled in the art knows that these assignments are handled variably by different authors, for example: *Candida famata Debaryomyces hansenii Torulaspora hansenii*, *Candida guilliermondii Pichia guilliermondii Yamadazyma guilliermondii* are used as synonyms. A man skilled in the art knows that microorganisms which can be used for the practice of the present invention, either as host cells or source for the isolation of DNA sequences, are available from depository authorities, e.g. the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC), the Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures (CBS) or the Deutsche Sammlung fur Mikroorganismen und Zellkulturen GmbH (DSM) or any other depository authority as listed in the Journal "Industrial Property" [(1991) 1, pages 29-40].
- [0013] DNA sequences useful for the practice of the present invention and encoding a polypeptide with riboflavin biosynthetic activity can be obtained from any microorganism known to produce riboflavin (see above) in form of e.g., genomic or c-DNA sequences by methods known to the man skilled in the art or by using the wellknown PCR-Technology. The principles of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) methode are outlined e.g. by White et al., Trends in Genetics, 5, 185-189 (1989), whereas improved methods are described, e.g. in Innis et al. [PCR Protocols: A guide to Methods and Applications, Academic Press, Inc. (1990)].
- [0014] The sequence information needed for the design of the PCR-primers can be obtained from any sequence data base, for example like Genbank (Intelligenetics, California, USA), European Bioinformatics Institute (Hinston Hall, Cambridge, GB), NBRF (Georgetown University, Medical Centre, Washington DC, USA) and Vecbase (University of Wisconsin, Biotechnology Centre, Madison, Wisconsin, USA).
- [0015] Once such DNA sequences have been obtained they can be expressed in any desirable host and the riboflavin biosynthetic activity of the encoded polypeptide can be determined by any assay known to the man skilled in the art and described, e.g. in Bacher A., G. Richter, H. Ritz, S. Eberhardt, M.Fisher and C. Krieger, Biosynthesis of riboflavin: GTP cyclohydrolase II, deaminase, and reductase. Methods in enzymology 1997; 280: 382-389; K.Kis, R. Volk and A. Bacher, Biosynthesis of riboflavin. Studies on the reaction mechanism of 6,7-dimethyl-8-ribityllumazine synthase. Biochemistry 1995, 34, 2883-2892; Logvinenko EM, Shavlovskii GM, Zakal'skii AE, Kontorovskaia Niu. Properties of 2,5-

diamino-4-oxy-6-ribosylaminopyrimidine-5'-phosphate reductase, a enzyme of the second stage of flavinogenesis in

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- [0016] The DNA sequences used for the practice of the present invention comprise at least one DNA sequence which enodes a polypeptide with riboflavin biosynthetic activity. It is however, understood by the man skilled in the art that also more then one, .g. all enzymes of the riboflavin bipsynthetic pathway can be encoded by such DNA sequences and one or more of this enzymes can be encoded by DNA sequences of different species origin or can be of partial or total

synthetic origin as long as they show at least one desired riboflavin biosynthetic activity. One example of such a DNA sequence is given in Fig. 5 coding for a GTP cyclohydrolase II. However, DNA sequences which hybridize under standard conditions to this DNA sequence and encode such a GTP cyclohydrolase are also useful for the practice of the present invention.

[0017] "Standard conditions" for hybridization in this context are conditions which are generally used by a man skilled in the art to detect specific hybridization signals and which are described, e.g. by Sambrook et al., "Molecular Cloning" second edition, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press 1989, New York, or preferably so called stringent hybridization and non-stringent washing conditions or more preferably so called stringent hybridization and stringent washing conditions a man skilled in the art is familiar with and which are described, e.g. in Sambrook et al. (s.a.). "Fragment of the DNA sequences" means in this context a fragment which codes for a polypeptide still having the enzymatic activity as specified above.

[0018] For the overexpression of the proteins encoded by the DNA sequences of the present invention these sequences can be linked to promoters which are functional in the desired yeast and are, e.g. the S.cerevisiae TEF-promotor (see Example 2) or the pho5-promotor [Vogel et al., Mol. Cell. Biol., 2050-2057 (1989); Rudolf and Hinnen, Proc, Natl. Acad. Sci. 84, 1340-1344 (1987)] or the gap-promotor or the aox1-promotor [Koutz et al., Yeast 5, 167-177 (1989; Sreekrishna et al., J. Basic Microbiol. 28, 265-278 (1988)] or the FMD promoter [Hollenberg et al., EP 299108] or MOS-promotor [Ledeboer et al., Nucleic Acids Res. 13, 3063-3082 (1985)].

[0019] The DNA sequences useful for the practice of the present invention can also comprise so called "ARS" elements (autonomounsly replicating sequence) as described, e.g. in Example 1.

#### Examples

[0020] If not specifically indicated or referred to by references standard procedures have been used as described, e.g. in Sambrook et al. "Molecular Cloning", (s.a.) and Cregg, J.M., K.J. Barriner, A.Y.Hessler, and K.R. Madden (1985). Pichia pastoris as a host system for transformations. Mol. Cell. Biol. 5, 3376-3385.

#### Example 1

### Autonomous replication of plasmid p19R1 in C. guilliermondii

[0021] The plasmid pFR1 carrying the RIB1 gene of *C. guilliermondii* has been described (Zakalsky at al. *Genetika* 26, 614-620, 1990). In order to subclone the RIB1 gene, plasmid pFR1 was digested with the restriction nuclease *Sal*I. The resulting fragments were cloned into the *Sal*I site of the pUC19 vector. The ligation mixture was transformed into the *E. coli* mutant strain BSV821 carrying a mutation of the *ribA* gene conducing to riboflavin deficiency. Colonies growing in the absence of riboflavin were isolated and were shown to contain a plasmid p19R1.

[0022] The plasmid p19R1 was sequenced and was shown to contain a 2.18 kb fragment of *C. guilliermondii* DNA in the *Sal*1 site of the pUC19 vector. The sequence of this insert is shown in Fig. 2.

[0023] The DNA sequence shown in Fig. 2 carries the *RIB1* gene of *C. guilliermondii*. The plasmid transforms *C. guilliermondii* mutant defective in the *RIB1* gene to riboflavin prototrophy and can replicate autonomously in this yeast species. The replication was shown to be due to the presence of an autonomously replicating sequence (ARS) comprising approximately base pairs 1542 to 1755 in Fig. 2 and extending into the structural gene *RIB1*.

## Example 2

## 45 Construction of a plasmid for hyperexpression of the RIB1 gene of C. guilliermondii

[0024] The *TEF* gene of the yeast, *S. cerevisiae*, specifies the translation elongation factor 1-alpha. This gene is known to be transcribed in *S. cerevisiae* with high efficiency.

[0025] A DNA fragment carrying the *S. cerevisiae TEF* promoter and the 5' part of the the *RIB1* gene of *C.guilliermondii* was obtained by PCR amplification. Initially, a DNA sequence located upstream from the 5' end of the *S. cerevisiae TEF* gene was amplified by PCR with primers ShBle\_V and TEF1\_H using chromosomal DNA of *S. cerevisiae* as a template. The amplified DNA fragment (subsequently designeted *TEF* promoter) comprises bp 15 984 to 16 344 of the sequence listed under EMBL accession number gb/U51033/YSCP9513.

[0026] Independently, a DNA fragment comprising the 5'-terminal part of *C. guilliermondii* GTP cyclohydrolase II structural gene was obtained by PCR with primers PGgtpCY\_V and PGgtpCY\_nco using p19R1 plasmid as a template. The amplified DNA fragment (subsequently designeted 5'GTPcII) comprises bp 460 to 1145 of the sequence shown in Fig. 2.

[0027] The DNA amplificates obtained in the two PCR reactions described above comprising parts of the TEF gene

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of *S. cerevisiae* and of the 5'GTPcII were mixed, and a third PCR amplification was performed using the primers ShBle\_V and PGgtpCY\_nco. This reaction yielded a DNA fragment which contains the complete *TEF* promoter and the 5' part of the *C.guilliermondii RIB1* gene.

[0028] All primers used in thes PCRs are shown in Table 2. The sequence of the final amplificate is shown in Fig. 3. [0029] The amplificate contains a cutting site for the restriction nucleases *SphI* which had been introduced via the primer ShBle\_V. The amplificate also contains an MscII sit which is a feature of the RIB1 gene. The amplificate was digested with *SphI* and *MscI*.

[0030] The plasmid p19R1 (whose constructions is described above) was also digested with the same enzymes, and the PCR amplificate was ligated into the digested plasmid.

[0031] The ligation mixture was transformed into a mutant designated Rib7 of *Escherichia coli* carrying a mutation of the *ribA* gene which specifies GTP cyclohydrolase II. Transformation was performed by electroporation according to the protocol of Invitrogene (5).

[0032] The *E. coli* cells were plated on Luria-Broth plates supplemented with ampicillin (100 mg/ml) which did not contain riboflavin. Colonies growing on this medium were isolated and were shown to contain a plasmid designated pTC2. [0033] The sequence of the insert of the plasmid pTC2 is shown in Fig. 3.

[0034] Plasmid pTC2 was digested with *XhoI* and *Sall* restriction endonucleases yielding 4.4 kb and 0.5 kb fragments. The 4.4 kb fragment was circularized with T4 DNA ligase. The ligation mixture was transformed into the Rib7 mutant of *E. coli* carrying the RibA mutation. Transformation was achieved by electroporation. The cells were plated on Luria-Broth plates containing ampicillin and no riboflavin (see above). Colonies growing on these plates were isolated and were shown to contain a plasmid pTCdXS2. The procedure had resulted in the removal of 0.5 kb base pairs from the plasmid pTC2.

**[0035]** The sequence of the insert of the plasmid pTCdXS2 is shown in Fig. 4. The open reading frame of the *RlB1* gene of *C.guilliermondii* is indicated. The DNA segment representing the promoter of the *TEF* gene of *S. cerevisiae* is also shown.

#### Example 3

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## Construction of a recombinant C. quilliermondii strains

[0036] The riboflavin deficient mutant rh-21 with an apparent defect of the RIB1 gene specifying GTP cyclohydrolase II (2) has been obtained after chemical mutagenesis of the L2 strain (2) which was previously obtained from the ATCC 9058 C. guilliermondii strain.

[0037] The plasmid pTCdXS2 was transformed into the *RIB1* mutant strain rh-21 of *C. guilliermondii* by the LiCl procedure, respectively (6). The cells were plated on YPD medium without added riboflavin. Colonies growing without riboflavin were isolated. They were monitored for GTP cyclohydrolase II activity and for riboflavin production as described below.

[0038] The prototrophic strains were monitored for the presence of DNA segments introduced with the plasmid by PCR analysis. PCR was performed using the primers ShBle\_V and PGgtpCY\_nco and boiled *C. guilliermondii* recombinant strains cells as template. Primer ShBle\_V is complementary to the *TEF* promoter and primer PGgtpCY\_nco is complementary to the *RlB1* structural gene. Amplificates of the expected length (1175 base pairs) were obtained from all transformants isolated. The amplificate obtained from strain XS-3 was isolated and was sequenced by the fluorescent dideoxy terminator method. The sequence is shown in Fig. 5. This sequence is identical with base pairs 1 to 1168 of the insert of plasmid pTCdXS2.

[0039] The recombinant transformants were genetically stable. Specifically, they did not segregate riboflavin deficient subclones.

### Example 4

### GTP cyclohydrolase activity in recombinant C. guilliermondii strains

[0040] The level of GTP cyclohydrolase II activity in the recombinant strains described above was determined as follows

[0041] The recombinant *C. guilliermondii* cells were grown aerobically in synthetic Burkholder medium supplemented with trace elements (Science 101, 180, 1945) but without asparagine, during 2-3 days at 30°C. *C. guilliermondii* L2 strain (wild type) served as a control in these experiments.

[0042] Cells from exponential growth phase were harvested by centrifugation (5000 g, 15 min), washed twice with 20 mM Tris HCl, pH 8.2, containing 1 mM DTT and 1 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>. Cells were stored at -20°C. Frozen cells mass (1-3 g) was thawed in 3-9 ml of washing buffer. Cells were disrupted by agitation with glass beads (d = 0.8 mm). After centrifugation,

cell extract was dialyzed overnight against 100 volumes of washing buffer. Protein concentration was measured by the Lowry method.

[0043] Reaction mixtures for GTP cyclohydrolase assays contained 20 mM Tris HCl, pH 8.2, 3 mM DTT, 2 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 1 mM GTP, and protein (protein concentration, 1-3 mg/ml, total volume, 4 ml). They were incubated at 37°C for 20 min in the dark.

[0044] After incubation, 2 ml aliquots were removed, and 2,3-butanedione was added to a final concentration of 0.5 mg/ml. The mixtures were incubated at 95°C for 30 min. Blank values were processed in the same way but without added diacetyl.

[0045] Differences in specific fluorescence of both types of aliquots were determined and were used to calculate the concentrations of 6,7-dimethylpteridin and the activity of GTP cyclohydrolase II. Results are shown in Table 3.

[0046] Strain L2 from which the mutant rh-21 had been derived was used as a control. The enzyme activity in strain L2 was 2,9 nmol mg<sup>-1</sup> h<sup>-1</sup>. No enzyme activity was found in the riboflavin deficient recipient strain rh-21 carrying a mutation of the *RIB1* gene. The recombinant strains obtained by transformation with plasmid pTCdXS2 showed enzyme levels between 6,5 and 13,4 nmol mg<sup>-1</sup> h<sup>-1</sup> Thus, the enzyme level in recombinant strains was 2.3 - 4.6-fold higher as compared with the *C. quilliermondii* strain L2.

[0047] The activity of riboflavin synthase was also measured in the recombinant strains. The activity of riboflavin synthase was not affected by the transformation with the plasmids p19RI, pTC2, pTCdXS2. All strains analyzed had riboflavin synthase activities in the range of 20 nmol mg<sup>-1</sup> h<sup>-1</sup> (Table 3).

### 20 Example 5

## Production of riboflavin by recombinant C. guilliermondii strains

[0048] C. guilliermondii strains (wild type and recombinant strains) were grown aerobically in synthetic Burkholder medium supplemented with trace elements [Science 101, p. 180, (1945)] but without asparagine during 4 days at 30 °C [F.W. Tanner, Jr.C. Vojnovich, J.M. Van Lanen, Riboflavin production by Candida species. Nature, 1945, 101 (2616): 180-181]. The suspension was centrifuged. Riboflavin concentration was determined fluorometrically. Results are shown in Table 4.

[0049] The wild strain L2 produced 1.2 mg riboflavin per liter under the conditions described. The recombinant strain XS-3 produced a 3-fold increased level of riboflavin (3.6 mg/l).

#### Example 6

#### Isolation of riboflavin

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[0050] Two Erlenmeyer flasks (2.51) each containing 0.51 of synthetic Burkholder medium containing trace elements but no asparagine were inoculated with the recombinant *C. guilliermondii* strain XS-3. The cultures were incubated with shaking at 30°C for 50 h. The solution was centrifuged. The supernatant was passed through a column of Florisil (4 ml bed volume) at a velocity of 500 ml/h. The column was washed with distilled water (7 ml). Riboflavin was eluted by a mixture of acetone/1M aqueous NH<sub>4</sub>OH. The effluent was evaporated to dryness. The yield of riboflavin was determined photometrically.

## References

## 45 [0051]

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Table 1

Enzymes and genes of the riboflavin pathway Enzyme Gene S. cerevisiae C. guilliermondii E. coli RIB1 Α GTP cyclohydrolase RIB1 ribA В ribD bacterial deaminase С RIB7 RIB2 yeast reductase D RIB2 RIB3 yeast deaminase Ε ribD bacterial reductase F unknown phosphatase G lumazine synthase RIB4 RIB5 ribE RIB5 RIB7 Н riboflavin synthase ribC 3,4-dihydroxy-2-butanon 4-phosphate synthase RIB3 RIB6 ١ ribB

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Table 2

Nucleotide sequences of the primers used.

Sequence (5' - 3')

AGGAGGAAGCTTGGCGCTATGGCATCGAAGG

GGGCATGCAATTCGAGCTCGGTACCCG

CGACTCACTATAGGAGGAAGCTTGGCGC

GCTGGTCGGTTAATGGGTGAAGCTGGG

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**Primer** 

ShBle\_V

TEB1\_H

PGgtpCY\_V

PGgtpCY\_nco

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Table 3

Activity of GTP cyclohydrolase II and riboflavin synthase in C. guilliermondii recombinant strains (time of growth: 40-48 h). N Riboflavin synthase GTP cyclohydrolase II Strain Ratio\* activity nmol mg-1 h-1 activity nmol mg-1 h-1 L2 (wild type) 21.6 2.88 1.00 1 2 R1-1 n.d. 10.08 3.50 3 R1-2 n.d. 4.20 1.46 4 R1-3 20.4 8.76 3.04 5 R1-4 19.8 7.80 2.70 6 R1-5 21.6 7.80 2.70 7 TC-1 20.4 9.60 3.33 TC-2 8 n.d. 8.40 2.92 9 TC-3 n.d. 7.56 2.63 XS-1 22.8 13.38 4.60 10 XS-2 11 n.d. 12.60 4.37 12 XS-3 n.d. 6.60 2.29

n.d. not determined.

Table 4

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Riboflavin production by recombinant C. guilliermondii strains (time of growth: 110 h. incubation temperature: 30 °C). N Relative riboflavin pro-Strain Riboflavin production duction [mg/l] 1.0 1 L2 (wild type) 1.2 R1-3 1.4 1.2 4 5 R1-4 3.6 3.0 6 R1-5 3.0 2.5 7 TC-1 1.4 1.2 9 TC-3 1.3 1.0 12 XS-3 3.6 3.0 13 XS-4 2.0 1.7 14 XS-5 2.3 1.9

<sup>\*</sup> GTP cyclohydrolase activity of recombinant strain divided by GTP cyclohydrolase activity of strain

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**Claims** 

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- 1. A yeast strain which has been transformed by a recombinant DNA sequence comprising a DNA sequence which upon expression in a suitable host cell encodes at least one polypeptide with riboflavin biosynthetic activity and which DNA sequence is transcriptionally linked to a promotor functional in such yeast strain.
- 45 2. A yeast strain of claim 1 which belongs to the group of flavinogenic yeasts which overproduce riboflavin under conditions of iron starvation.
  - 3. A yeast strain of claim 2 which is selected from the following group: Schwanniomyces, preferably Schwanniomyces occidentalis, Debaryomyces, preferably Debaryomyces kloeckeri, Torulopsis, preferably Torulopsis candida, or Candida, preferably Candida guilliermondii or Candida famata.
    - The yeast strain of claim 3 which is Candida guilliermondii or Candida famata.
  - 5. A yeast strain as claimed any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the polypeptide encoding DNA sequence is from yeast, preferably flavinogenic yeasts which overproduce riboflavin under conditions of iron starvation more preferably Candida, e.g. Candida guilliermondii or Candida famata.
    - 6. A yeast strain as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the polypeptide encoding DNA sequence encodes a

protein with GTP cyclohydrolase II activity and is selected from the following DNA sequences:

a) the DNA sequence as shown in Fig. 5 or its complementary strand;

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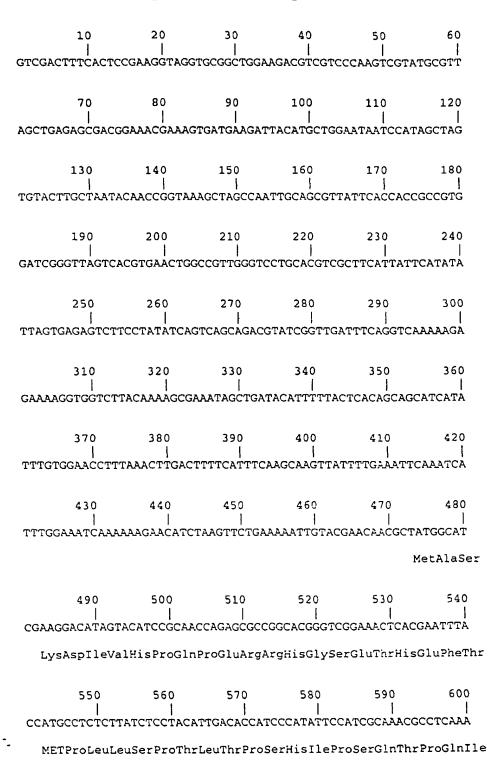
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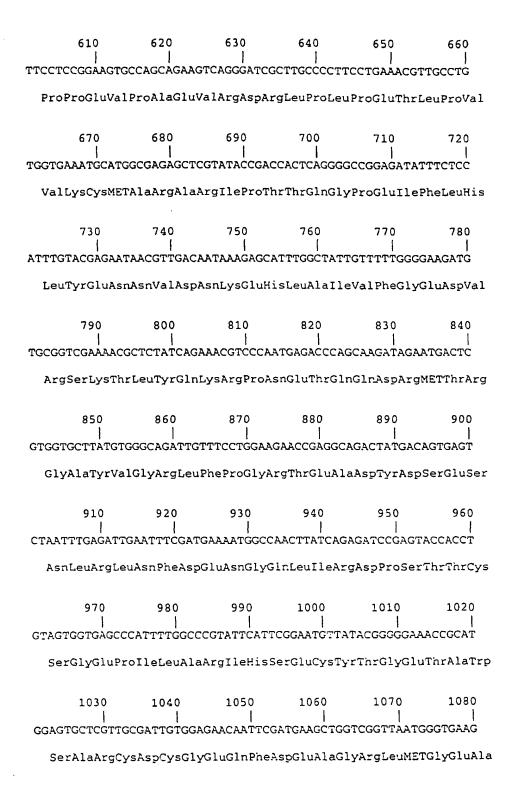
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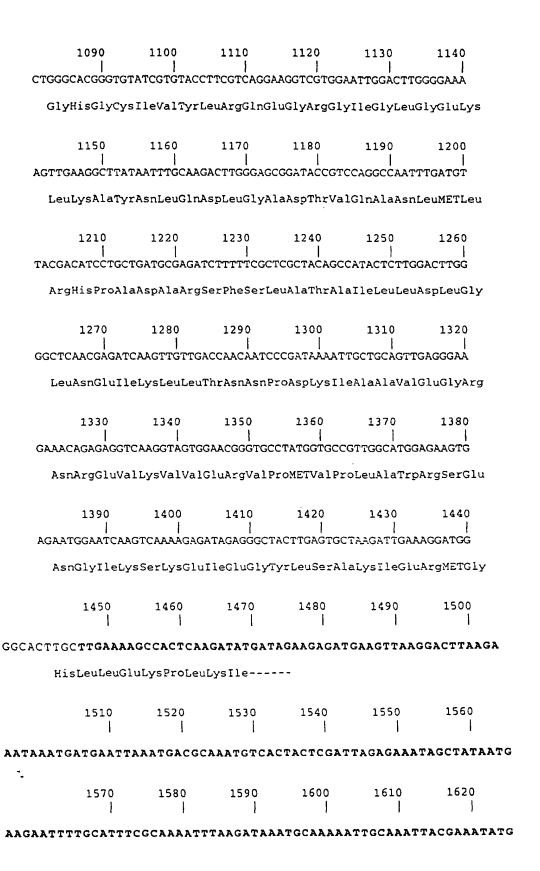
- b) DNA sequences which hybridize under standard conditions to the protein coding regions of the DNA sequences defined in (a) or fragments thereof; and
- c) DNA sequences which, but for the degeneracy of the genetic code, would hybridize to the DNA sequences defined in (a) and (b).
- 7. A yeast strain as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6 wherein the promotor is the TEF S. cerevisiae promotor.
- 8. A process for the production of riboflavin characterized therein that a yeast strain as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7 is cultured under suitable culture conditions and the riboflavin produced is isolated from the medium or the yeast strain by methods known to the man skilled in the art.
- 9. A process for the production of a food or feed composition characterized therein that riboflavin as obtained by the process of claim 8 is mixed with one or more suitable food or feed ingredients.

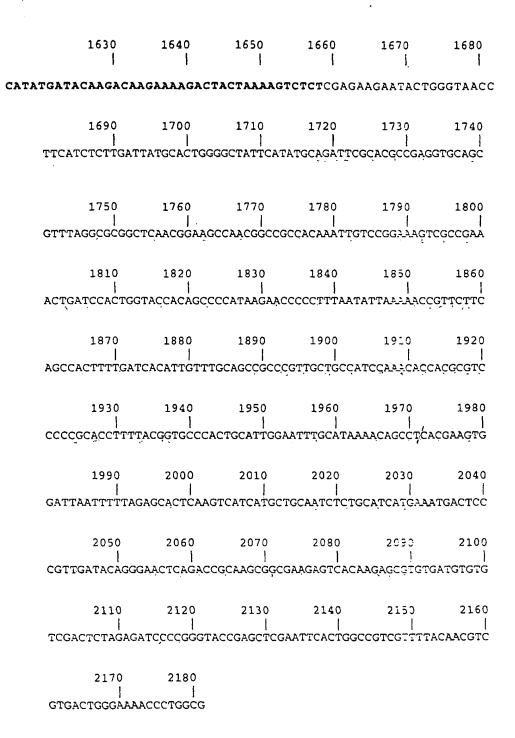
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Fig. 2.
Nucleotide sequence of the p19R1 insert.



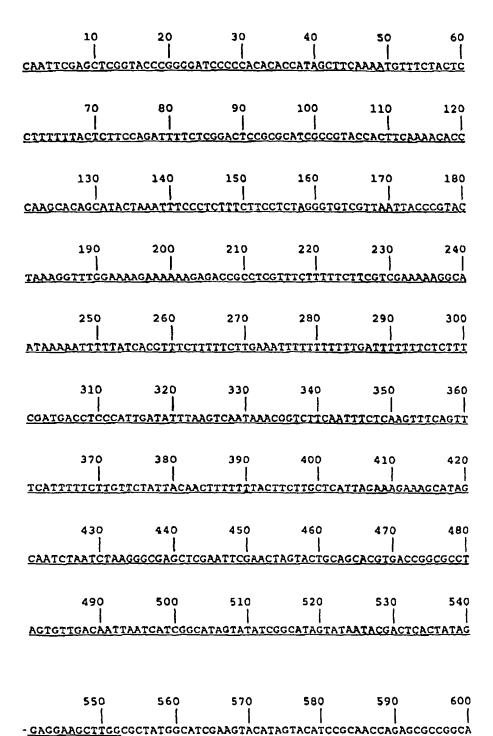






Sequence of the RIB1 gene is translated. Sequence of ARS element is typed in bold letters.

Fig.3 Nucle tide sequence of the pTC2 insert.



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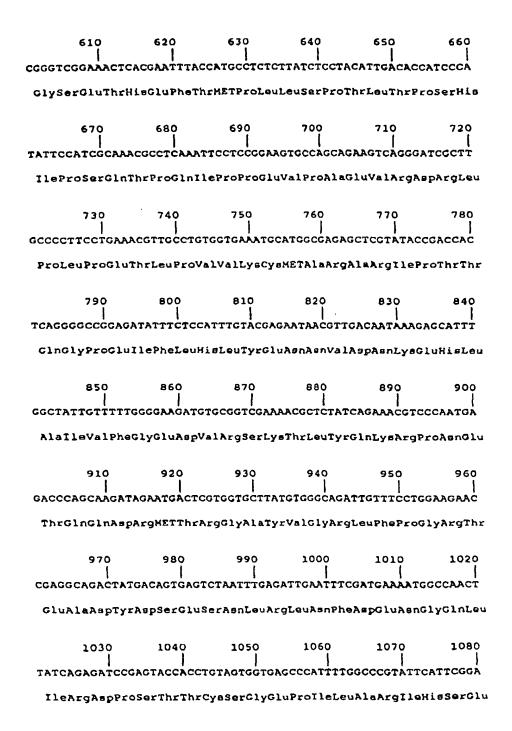
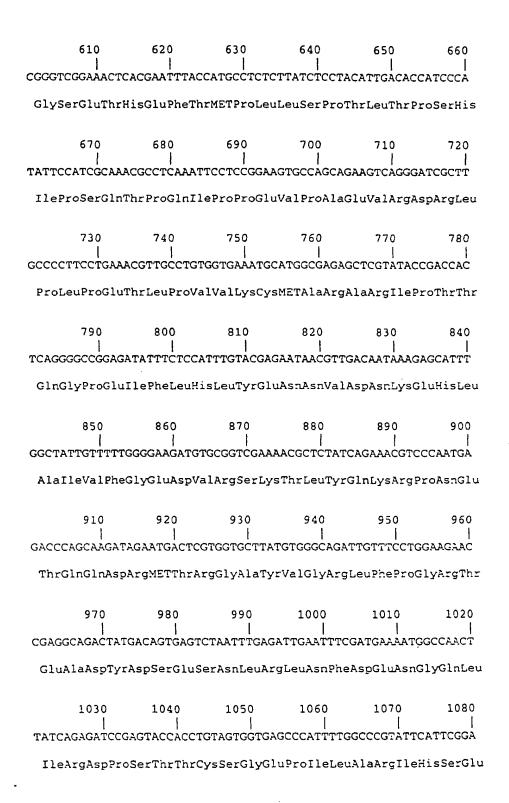
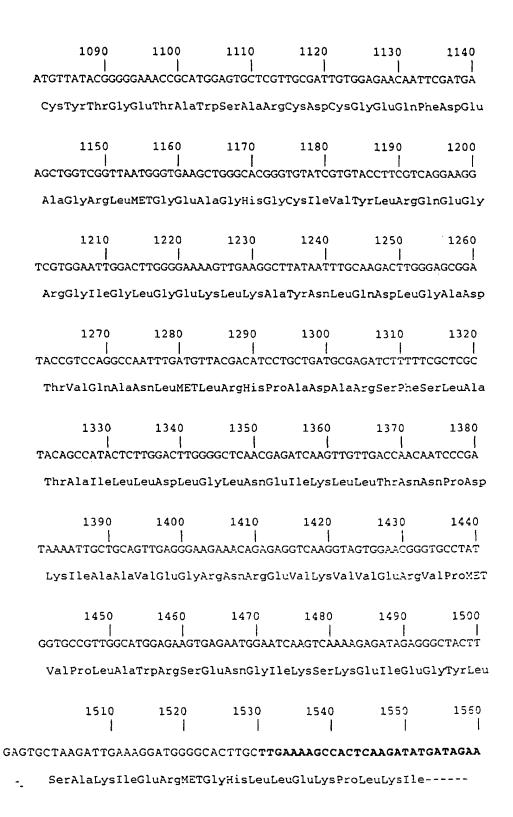


Fig.4
Nucleotide sequence of the pTCdXS-2 insert.

CAATTCC	10   GAGCTCGGTA	20   CCCGGGGATC	30       CCCCACACAC	40   CATAGCTTCA	50   AAATGTTTCT	60   <u>ACTC</u>
CTTTTT	70      ACTCTTCCA	80   GATTTTCTCG	90   GACTCCGCGC	100   ATCGCCGTAC	110   CACTTCAAAA	120   CACC
CAAGCAG	130   CAGCATACTA	140   AATTTCCCTC	150   <u>TTTCTTCCTC</u>	160   CTAGGGTGTCG	170   GTTAATTACCC	180   GTAC
TAAAGG	190   TTTGGAAAAG	200   AAAAAAGAGA	210   .ccgccтcgt1	220   ! <u>!</u> ! <u>TCTTTTTCT1</u>	230    CCGTCGAAAAA	240      GGCA
ATAAAA	250   <u>ATTTTTATCA</u>	260   .CGTTTCTTT	270   TCTTGAAAT	280     	290   <u> </u> 	300   <u>"CTTT</u>
CGATGA	310   CCTCCCATTC	320   SATATTTAAGT	330   <u>CAATAAACG</u>	340   GTCTTCAATT	350   <u> </u>   CTCAAGTTTC	360   CAGTT
TCATTT	370   TTCTTGTTC1	380   TATAAAATTA	390   <u> </u>   TTTTTTACTT	400   CTTGCTCATT	410   AGAAAGAAAGG	420   CATAG
<u>CAATCI</u>	430   <u>NAATCTAAGG</u>	440   GCGAGCTCGA	450   ATTCGAACTA	460   GTACTGCAGC	470   ACGTGACCGGG	480   CGCCT
<u>AGTGT1</u>	490       GACAATTAA	500   TCATCGGCAT	510   <u>AGTATATCGG</u>	520   CATAGTATAA	530   TACGACTCAC	540   TATAG
GAGGA	550   <u>AGCTTGG</u> CGC	560   TATGGCATCG	570   AAGTACATAC	580   STACATCCGCA	590   ACCAGAGCGC	600   CGGÇA

 ${\tt METALaSerLysTyrIleValHisProGlnProGluArgArgHis}$ 





GAGATGAAGTTAAGGACTTAAGAAATAAATGATGAATTAAATGACGCAAATGTCACTACT CGATTAGAGAAATAGCTATAATGAAGAATTTTGCATTTCGCAAAATTTAAGATAAATGCA AAAATTGCAAATTACGAAATATGCATATGATACAAGACAAGAAAAGACTACTAAAAAGTCTCT

Sequence of the TEF promoter is underlined.

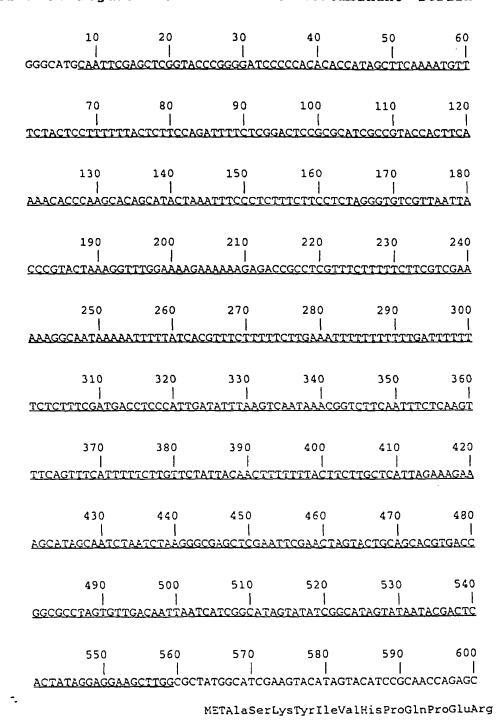
Sequence of the RIB1 gene is translated.

Sequence of ARS element is typed in bold letters.

Fig.5

m 10 4 4

Nucleotide sequence of PCR product obtained with primers ShBle\_V and PGgtpCY\_nco using boiled cells of P.guilliermondii XS-3 recombinant strain.



1150 1160 1170 | TCGATGAAGCTGGTCGGTTAATGGGTGAAGCTGGG

n + +

 ${\tt AspGluAlaGlyArgLeuMETGlyGluAlaGly}$ 

Sequence of the *TEF* promoter is underlined. Partial sequence of the *RIB1* gene is translated.

